a mode setup unit which sets up a stand-by mode in which a predetermined power and/or driving pulse is supplied to an image pickup device, capable of commencing an image pickup operation immediately in response to a release instruction; and

an image pickup controller which controls a preliminary operation for image pickup if a first condition wherein the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup unit and the image pickup operation is allowed to be commenced immediately in response to the release instruction, and a second condition wherein all of the plurality of detectors detect the contact or approach, are both satisfied.

2. (AMENDED) A camera according to claim 1, further comprising mode holding means using a non-volatile memory, which holds a setup state of the stand-by mode set by the mode setup unit even during a power-off period.

3. (AMENDED) A camera according to claim 1, further comprising a mode release unit which releases the stand-by mode when the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup unit and a period in which at least one of the plurality of detectors does not detect the contact or approach of a hand reaches a predetermined time.

4. (AMENDED) A camera according to claim 1, further comprising operation controller which renders a part of the plurality of detectors operational, when the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup unit and a period in which at least one of the plurality of detectors does not detect the contact or approach of a hand reaches a predetermined time.

5. (AMENDED) A camera according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of detectors are provided at least at a grip part and a release button part of a camera body.

7. (AMENDED) An electronic still camera comprising:

a detector which is provided near a release button and detects contact or approach of a hand to make an image pickup operation;

a main power switch which switches on and off a power source of the camera; and

an image pickup controller which executes a preliminary operation for image pickup if a first condition wherein the power switch is set on and a second condition wherein the detector detects the contact or approach of a hand are both satisfied.

9. (AMENDED) An electronic still camera comprising:

a plurality of detectors which are provided respectively at different positions and which detect contact or approach of a hand;

a mode setup unit which sets up a stand-by mode in which a predetermined power and/or driving pulse is supplied to an image pickup device, capable of commencing an image pickup operation immediately in response to a release instruction; and

an image pickup controller which executes a preliminary operation for image pickup if a first condition wherein the stand-by mode is set by the mode setup unit and the image pickup operation is allowed to be commenced immediately in response to the release instruction, and a second condition wherein at least one of the plurality of

detectors detects the contact or approach of a hand, are both satisfied.

10. (AMENDED) A method for controlling an electronic still camera, comprising:

detecting contact or approach of a hand to a camera body, by a plurality of detectors provided respectively at different positions;

bringing an image pickup system including at least an image pickup device into a stand-by state in which the image pickup system commences an image pickup operation immediately in response to a release instruction; and

executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if a first condition wherein the image pickup system is in the stand-by state and the image pickup operation is allowed to be commenced immediately in response to the release instruction, and a second condition wherein all the plurality of detectors detect the contact or approach of a hand, are both satisfied.

11. (AMENDED) A method according to claim 10, wherein the preliminary operation is executed if all the plurality of detectors detect the contact or approach of a hand.

12. (AMENDED) A method according to claim 11, wherein when detecting, if the image pickup system is in the stand-by state and a part of the plurality of detectors detects the contact or approach of a hand to make an image pickup operation, another part of the plurality of detectors starts a detection operation.

13. (AMENDED) A method according to claim 10, wherein the plurality of detectors are provided at least at a grip part and a release button part of a camera body.

14. (AMENDED) A method according to claim 10, further comprising writing a setup of the image pickup system in the stand-by state into a non-volatile memory if an input for turning off a power source is given.

15. (AMENDED) A method according to claim 10, further comprising releasing the stand-by state when the stand-by state is set and a period in which at least one of the plurality of detectors does not detect the contact or approach of a hand reaches a predetermined time.

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18. (AMENDED) A method for controlling an electronic still camera, comprising [steps of]:

detecting contact or approach of a hand by a detector provided near a release button;

switching on and off a main power source of the camera; and

executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if a first condition wherein the power switch is set on and a second condition wherein the detector detects the contact or approach of a hand are both satisfied.

Please add the following new claim:

-- 20. (NEW) A method for controlling an electronic still camera, comprising:

detecting contact or approach of a hand to a camera body, by a plurality of detectors provided respectively at different positions;

bringing an image pickup system including at least an image pickup device into a stand-by state in which the image pickup system commences an image pickup operation immediately in response to a release instruction; and

executing a preliminary operation for image pickup if a first condition wherein the stand-by mode is set and the image pickup operation is allowed to be commenced immediately in response to the release instruction, and a second condition wherein at least one of the plurality of detectors detects the contact or approach, are both satisfied.--

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(c)(1)(ii), separate sheets with the rewritten claims marked-up to show the changes made to the previous version of the claims, is filed herewith.

REMARKS

Please consider the foregoing amendments before examination of this application.

New claims

New independent claim 20 is similar to claim 10 but recites a different second condition for executing a preliminary operation. This claim is supported, for example, by the description on page 31, line 7 et seq. of the specification.